

the Board (of Admiralty) to meet this group of ships with a trawler escort, in the absence of sufficient destroyers, was a stumbling block, but this was ultimately overcome, and the success of this convoy, which was practically never out of the danger zone, and which never had anything but a trawler escort, strengthened with one destroyer, and generally only a ^c **Q**/ ship or an American gunboat for ocean escort, has been wonderful.^{5*}

The difficulties experienced by the War Cabinet in handling this problem are inherent in all war operations when civilian opinion clashes with the Value of [^] **ifa** ^{tiat} of the experts. Naval science

ⁱ **suqqSns** * **anc*** strategy are matters very remote from the lay comprehension, and the aura of authority glistened round the heads of the Naval High Command. Whenever I urged the adoption of the convoy system, I was met, as I have related, with the blank wall of assertion that the experts of the Admiralty knew on technical grounds that it was impossible. That is a very difficult argument to counter. A persistence of a few more weeks in their refusal to listen to advice from outside would have meant irretrievable ruin for the Allies. Neptune's trident would have been snatched out of Britannia's hands by the ravaging monster of the great deep. It was not the first time in this War that the lesson was

driven home—luckily in time—that no
great national
enterprise can be carried through
successfully in
peace or in war except by a trustful co-
operation
between expert and layman—tendered
freely by both,
welcomed cordially by both.

* Extract from Ministry of Shipping Report on
Convoys*